



WalkBoston

September 15, 2005

Mark Maloney, Director
Boston Redevelopment Authority
Boston City Hall, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02210

Attn: Heather Campisano, Project Manager
Richard McGuinness, Waterfront Planning Director
Brad Washburn, Deputy Waterfront Planning Director

Re: Lovejoy Wharf Draft Public Impact Report

Dear Director Maloney:

WalkBoston is New England's premier pedestrian advocacy organization, with members from 75 eastern Massachusetts cities and towns. We promote walking for transportation, health and recreation, and work to create and preserve safe and attractive walking environments that build healthy communities. We work with organizations throughout the metropolitan area and around the state.

We write today with comments on the DPIR for Lovejoy Wharf. As described in the DPIR, the Project is a mixed-use redevelopment that will include approximately 260 residential units, 40,000 square feet of ground-level retail uses, and the rehabilitation of the existing wharf structure to provide an extension of the Harborwalk.

As WalkBoston noted in our comments on the ENF/PNF for the Project, Lovejoy Wharf occupies a pivotal location in the City of Boston's pedestrian environment, a location where the City's gridded street and sidewalk system intersects with the Harborwalk. It will be a critical link in the pedestrian connection between the Bulfinch Triangle/Downtown North and Charlestown. Lovejoy Wharf also presents an important opportunity to connect the City with both Boston Harbor and the Charles River.

Our comments on the DPIR focus on the pedestrian environment that the project proposes to create, and on its relationship to the surrounding urban environment.

In order for Lovejoy Wharf to succeed in creating compelling pedestrian connections from the existing street and sidewalk system to the waterfront, it must attract pedestrians to and across its site by activating its ground floor and open spaces. The design of the Lovejoy Wharf site and buildings must animate the pedestrian connections to the existing street and sidewalk system and establish connections to future pedestrian facilities including the new Charles River Basin paths and bridges. The basic elements of the site design presented in the DPIR have created an appropriate framework for pedestrian circulation, but a number of details require further attention.

Beverly Way

The revised orientation of the building's main entrance to Beverly Way is a significant improvement over its former orientation toward Lovejoy Place. The Beverly Way orientation will add activity in a location where it can be seen from Causeway Street and enliven the main pedestrian access route into the site and beyond the site to connect to the Harborwalk and Charlestown. It will provide pedestrians with a greater sense of welcome and security because they will be using a more intensively occupied space. In addition, reorientation of the entry allows Lovejoy Place to serve primarily as a vehicular zone, thus improving vehicle access without diminishing pedestrian safety and access. We believe the design can be further improved by:

- Elimination of the secondary vehicle entrance 'curb cut' dedicated to the garage access zone for Lovejoy Wharf (the curb cut creates an awkward and unusable island and an additional driveway that pedestrians must cross). This curb cut should be removed and replaced with a continuation of the walkway in an effort to make the pedestrian way safer and more convenient. Vehicles should turn into Lovejoy Place and then turn into the garage entrance area. This will allow the eastern side of Beverly Way along the edge of the Lovejoy Wharf building to serve the pedestrian "desire line" for access to the building entrance and reduce disruptions to the pedestrian walkway.
- The garage access area should be designed to serve most residents who drive to the building and wish to unload groceries etc. Residents should not normally drive their vehicles into the circular drive area, leaving this as a primarily pedestrian zone.
- The drop-off/pick-up zone in front of the main entrance should be designed as a mixed pedestrian-vehicle zone with flush paving and pedestrian scaled, attractive detailing to make it safe and comfortable for pedestrian circulation. This model has been used successfully in several local developments (and more widely in Europe) to reclaim drives as part of the pedestrian zone.

In order to enhance views toward the water, and into the site from Causeway Street, several elements of the landscaping and design require careful attention so that the development's site design reinforces the City's aspirations for the Harborwalk and waterfront. These include:

- Ensuring that views to the water remain unobstructed by planting or site furniture. Trees should be limbed up to allow vistas below the canopy.
- Lighting should be of a scale and intensity to serve pedestrians, and consistent lighting fixtures and lamp types should clearly indicate a seamless connection from Causeway Street to Beverly Way to the Harborwalk beyond. Lighting design (including the types of fixtures and their location) should be based on defining the overall pedestrian space and entries.
- Careful consideration of the 'crossroads element' in terms of both design and location. It will be particularly important to determine whether the most appropriate location is on the Lovejoy Wharf site or whether it might be better located somewhat closer to the dam.

Harborwalk

Access along the water's edge of the site should provide seamless connections to other sections of Harborwalk lying to the east and west of the site. The provision of the floating dock

along the edge of the site will create an attractive means for pedestrians to get close to the water, and should remain open for public access.

The design details of the Harborwalk should address the following issues:

- The scale of the site paving and street furniture should clearly give Harborwalk the feel of a civic waterfront public way and provide design continuity with other portions of the Harborwalk.
- As a pedestrian moves away from the water's edge, toward the LoveJoy Wharf building and into the park space adjacent to the building, the design should transition to a more intimate, detailed park scale and include comfortable places to sit and be out of the circulation zone.

North Washington Street

The relationship of Lovejoy Wharf to North Washington Street is also critical to the success of the project. In order to attract people to the waterfront and to the proposed facilities of public accommodation in the building, pedestrians on North Washington Street must perceive the site as attractive and accessible. The creation of the small pavilion building to create a connection between the street and wharf levels is a good way to make this connection, but additional measures will be needed. Several issues should be considered as the project progresses:

- The pavilion building should be visible to people approaching the building from the North Washington Street/Causeway Street intersection and consideration should be given to how that could be accomplished through building massing and materials, lighting, architectural elements, banners or other design features. Proximity to the sidewalk edge will allow the pavilion to establish a welcoming gateway character for this upper landing to the Harborwalk below.
- The design of the stairway from North Washington Street to wharf level needs to allow the greatest possible visual connection, and both design and lighting elements should make the connection as appealing as possible. The steps should be generous in scale and materials to make them as comfortable as possible for walking.
- Enlivening the sidewalk of North Washington Street through paving, lighting, window displays, flowers, and other elements should be considered.
- The North Washington Street/Causeway Street intersection is wide and intimidating for pedestrians. The developer should consider ways that it might be made more pedestrian-friendly in order to attract Freedom Trail walkers to the Lovejoy Wharf site.
- Will 24/7 operation of the elevator providing access between North Washington Street and the wharf be provided? With the lobby of the building in operation 24/7 it should be possible to provide closed circuit TV monitoring of the elevator.

We look forward to learning more about the project as it moves through the next stages of permitting and design.

Very Truly Yours,

Wendy Landman
Executive Director